



▲ Richmond Police Sr. Patrolman Kelly Rouse was named Officer of the Year by the American Police Hall of Fame for his bravery and professionalism during an armed robbery in which he rescued several Kentucky Fried Chicken employees from what they believed a certain death.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED



>> I was almost relieved, you know, that this wasn't just a one-time thing. It wasn't just somebody desperate. He had made his life choices. I don't think I'm glad to say it, but he won't be hurting anybody else now. He won't be putting anybody else in that situation.

When Chief Brock told me I was receiving

this award, I actually told him I thought the whole second shift should be recognized, because those guys didn't know what they were entering. They heard shots fired, they knew an officer was in the building, and they came in literally with no regard for their own safety. None. If I would have been the one shot, I'm sure they would have done what they had to do to pull my body out if necessary. It almost makes you teary-eyed that they think that much about their fellow co-worker, to come in there and, if need be, to take another life to get their co-worker out. Where else does that happen? You see all these other shootings and people are running the other way. But the police and my co-workers were running toward the bad guy. It's amazing.

After a couple days, once you piece everything together and realize what the bad guy's intentions were, you realize everything is going to be alright. He came to a fight. I mean, he came prepared. It's kind of like looking back on my military combat experience. Everybody has a choice. Those terrorists or those bad guys, they could either get with the program, accept their new government, accept this regime is over and try to help their country get back on its feet. Or, they can face the wrath of the U.S. military.

In this situation, he had a choice. Just an hour or two before he was home with his wife watching TV. He told her, 'I'll be back in a little while, I've got something to do.'

◀ (Far Left) Richmond Police Sr. Patrolman Kelly Rouse, left, received his national award from Jack Rinich, president of the American Police Hall of Fame during a ceremony in Orlando, Fla.

◀ (Left) The family of Richmond Police Sr. Patrolman Kelly Rouse joined him in Florida as he was honored as the American Police Hall of Fame 2011 Officer of the Year.